“Damn Fine Coffee” Advertising: David Lynch’s TV Commercial Adaptation of Twin Peaks

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“Damn fine coffee!” Agent Cooper exclaims, but he’s not praising the fresh brew of the Double R Diner or the Great Northern Hotel – in this context, Cooper prefers the smooth taste of Georgia brand canned coffee. At the height of Japan’s national obsession with *Twin Peaks* in 1992, David Lynch directed a series of commercials for Japanese television featuring the main cast of the show in the service of the Japanese coffee beverage. The commercials feature a tailored narrative arc that is reminiscent of the series’ plot and adapted the “feel” of the *Twin Peaks* universe. The company, unsatisfied with the outcome, cancelled the project halfway through production. Though not financially successful for Georgia Coffee (a Coca Cola brand), the commercials were curiously effective at conveying the fictional world of *Twin Peaks* within only four 30-second instalments. How was Lynch capable of this aesthetic achievement while at the same time peddling a commercial product? How is the condensed audiovisual realm of television commercials exploited by Lynch in these circumspectly crafted advertisements?

Studying the complexities of these compressed mini-narratives is important, as these

commercials give us insight into narrative and implicit strategies of appeal in a competitive advertising market. The ability to creatively reconstruct narrative worlds within the span of a TV spot while purveying a product is delicate work. I argue that these commercials are auteur texts facilitated by the turn to televisuality that emerged during the early 1990s. Lynch was one of an emergent group of auteurs who turned to creating and directing advertisements during this period, but this work is often neglected in scholarly analyses of their outputs. And yet, when auteur directors are involved, the popular press has reported and drawn attention to TV advertisement authorship. For instance, in anticipation of the TV revival of the *Twin Peaks* series, during the week of November 20, 2015 more than twenty online articles were published that discussed the Lynch directed Japanese Georgia Coffee commercials. The framing of the commercials in these articles presented them not merely as advertisements, but also as auteurist texts. Some of the headlines label the group of ads a "mini-series", "mini-season", and "reboot". The popular treatment of the discovery of the commercials situates them squarely with Lynch's body of artistic audiovisual work.

This article also considers Lynch's Japanese Georgia Coffee commercials with a particular focus on the adaptation of Angelo Badalamenti's score for the series and its deployment within the advertisements. Through a close reading of the last of the commercials my study will demonstrate how the familiar, unmistakable music contributes to the reconstitution of the world of *Twin Peaks*, while purveying a commercial product. It considers the interaction between visual and aural aesthetics of these ads within the wider context of auteur theory, Michel Chion's concept of the "synch point" in audiovisual phrasing, and story grammars.

Blurring drama and commercial interests is not uncommon in advertising. Sometimes the celebrities that appear in a particular show may be cast together in a dramatised commercial portraying the characters they play in the series, as is the case with Lynch's Georgia Coffee commercials. Narrative advertising must condense a narrative into 15 or 30 seconds, thus drawing on intertextuality as referential shortcut helps to situate and communicate meaning in an economical way. But beyond intertextuality, these commercials are a cogent and relatively early example of transmedia story telling. This narrative structure, first proposed by Henry Jenkins and more recently taken up by scholars like Jason Mittell and Carlos Alberto Scolari, expands narratives by deploying different modes (verbal, textual, visual) and media (television, cinema, books). Stories are not merely adapted to new modes and media, but also contribute to a particular narrative world, each adding a certain complexity. The Georgia Coffee ads are more than paratexts that orbit the main text of the television series or an emulation of the story world; they contribute an additional story that occurs in the *Twin Peaks* universe. Though the ads do not directly function within the central narrative of the television series, they do exist in the same story world, this is evident not only in the inclusion of some of the main personalities from the series, but also in the consistent treatment of character dynamics, and a fittingly

typical plot. Furthermore, as co-creator of the *Twin Peaks*, Lynch's work on these commercials lends his authorial voice to the narrative extension. The relationship between the rights holders and Georgia Coffee, regarding the adaptation of the show's narrative, is unclear, however the series did sanction transmedia storytelling through the publishing of books like *The Secret Diary of Laura Palmer* (1990), a replica of the character's diary complete with additional information about other characters, plots, and torn out pages, *The Autobiography of F.B.I. Special Agent Dale Cooper: My Life, My Tapes* (1991), and *Twin Peaks: An Access Guide to the Town* (1991), among others. Since the commercials are now on streaming sites like YouTube, they are available for repeated viewings as entertainment and accessible to wider audiences than their initial broadcast in Japan in 1993, thus open to the construction of new meanings and interpretations by audiences.

Certainly in the condensed narratives of advertising, signs and implicit meanings prove economical in communicating quite a lot with limited resources. One of the strategies employed to draw out narrative as a persuasive tool in advertising is David Glenn Mick's analytical framework, which applies story grammars to televised story ads. Mick argues that story ads are a distinct form of television advertising that draw on story grammar to efficiently engage consumers while promoting a product. Story grammar is composed of canonical sequences of story elements that are required to qualify a narrative. The grammar of ads is usually presented in a series of episodes (sequences of events) within a single ad, which rest upon the foundational "base structure" that holds the story together. Mick applies his analytical framework to individual ads, but the general concept can also be applied to advertising campaigns that extend the story arc over multiple chapters. Mick also identifies some significant differences between traditional storytelling, from which the story grammar is derived, and televised story ads:

1. Consumers come to story ads aware that they are being advertised to and thus are more skeptical towards the text than they would be with other narrative content;
2. Story ads are condensed on account of the medium;
3. Story ads only include one or two episodes within a single ad, a result of time constraints;

Mick, however, does not account for ads whose story extends over multiple story chapters. Though not altogether common, other campaigns have adopted a serial narrative across advertisements to sell their product – Barbara Stern calls these the "melodramas of advertising" – although I know of no other campaign, apart from Lynch's Georgia Coffee ads, that does this while simultaneously adapting an existing television narrative.

Lynch and Advertising

As a creative space, many artists from various disciplines have turned to work in advertising. However, the industry is generally marked by a disregard for authorship, relegating creative recognition to the ad agency, given that the work is highly collaborative. But as the auteur-director emerged as a star during the late 1980s and early 1990s, the sign-value of the celebrity was extended to the realm of production. Lynch has created commercials for a wide range of products, from food to high-end fragrances. The director has created ad campaigns for Yves Saint Laurent, Giorgio Armani, PlayStation 2, public service announcements for the City of New York, Nissan, Alka Seltzer Plus, Barilla Pasta, and Clearblue Easy pregnancy tests, among many others. Lynch was active during a period when the institutional wall between serious film and the television advertising industry was crumbling. Traditionally adverse to overtly aligning their prestige with commercial interest, in the mid-1980s many auteurs began lending their expertise and name recognition to television advertising campaigns. Timothy Corrigan identifies a shift within auteurism during the 1980s, in which the auteur became commodified, a star in his/her own right, and a marker of meaning that audiences recognise and use to interpret a film (or other text) before and after experiencing it: auteurism evolved into “a way of viewing and receiving […] rather than as a mode of production.” John Thornton Caldwell also identifies the emergence of a “televisuality” during this period, part of which was a turn to the wider aesthetic tastes of the audience. Therefore, as marketers came to recognise broader audience demand for distinction, the “commerce of authorial intent” became possible.

During the early 1990s a wave of auteur directors turned from feature film making to create television commercials, and were paid quite handsomely for their work. For example, Martin Scorcese directed for Giorgio Armani, Rob Reiner for Coca-Cola, Francis Ford Coppola created an ad for General Motors that didn’t go to air, Woody Allen created commercials for the Japanese department store Seibu, and Jean-Luc Godard directed an ad for Nike. Around this time Swiss cigarette company Parisienne managed to attract auteur talent to direct a string of commercials to help establish their brand, including the Coen Brothers, Roman Polanski, Jean-Luc Godard, Emir Kusturica, and Lynch.

Lynch’s commercials vary between mysterious sensualism, surrealist journeys, and those that bear very subtle marks of his style. Lynch’s first TV commercial campaign was for Calvin Klein’s scent Obsession. He created a series of four ads, each an audiovisual interpretation of a quote by F. Scott Fitzgerald, Ernest Hemingway, D. H. Lawrence, and Gustave Flaubert, read by voiceover. Each is filmed in black and white, romantic, seductive, and generally in line with the eroticism of Calvin Klein brand advertising. Lynch has been in demand to create advertisements for many fragrance companies including Giorgio Armani, Yves Saint Laurent, Lancôme, Karl Lagerfeld, Jill Sander, and Gucci. In 1992 he created a 2:30 minute ad for Armani’s Gio fragrance that follows a mysterious and

beautiful woman – the ad poses the question “Who is Gio?” – as she seamlessly moves between glamorous social circles and the city’s seedy underground dance scene, seemingly adored by all. Also shot in black and white, but with no dialogue, Lynch relies on visuals and music to express the narrative.

In contrast to the fragrance commercials that deal with the serious and sensual, and which often feature Lynch’s brand of the femme fatale, some of his other advertising work is stylistically very different. One of Lynch’s most inventive campaigns is a set of TV commercials for Playstation 2 launched in 2000. Each commercial is distinct, but all contain a significant element of surrealism, sometimes including troubling imagery or uncomfortable narratives. The aim of these mini-epics was to encourage the viewer to enter the “third place”, a different and new sensory experience that Playstation identified as the crux of their marketing efforts for their new gaming console. Lynch’s 1993 Barilla pasta ad, an example of some of his more subtle advertising work, features Gerard Depardieu as a quirky cafe owner who cheers up injured passersby by preparing them a Barilla pasta dish. Similarly, the commercials for Clearblue Easy pregnancy tests and Alka Seltzer Plus do not seem markedly different from other ads on TV at the time, but Lynch’s creative mark is still perceptible. From his camp humour to brief glimpses of the surreal, even in these short forays into quotidian commercial narratives, Lynch manages to entangle the mundane with the bizarre.

However, the many TV commercials that Lynch created and directed are often not included in his body of auteur works. Though it is common for the advertising industry to generally erase authorship of commercials in order to foreground the brand, Lynch’s projects are well known amongst fans and widely publicised in the popular press. By the time Lynch was approached to direct his first advertising project, a set of four commercials for Calvin Klein’s Obsession in 1988, Lynch-as-brand had been established through his feature films *Eraserhead* (1977), *The Elephant Man* (1980), *Dune* (1984), and *Blue Velvet* (1986). As one of the core tenets of modern advertising is product differentiation, Lynch’s distinctive style was sought after by ad agencies. He, of course, was cognisant of this, commenting in regard to ad making, “I’m just trying to do what I think is right to sell a product”.

When asked by Chris Rodley whether he enjoyed making TV advertisements, Lynch replied, “Well, they’re little bitty films, and I always learn something by doing them”. When pressed by Rodley if he thought there was any concern that the Georgia Coffee commercials may have undermined the “magic” of *Twin Peaks*, Lynch agreed and stated that he may not have created them for a North American market, but added that he felt compelled since “they were so much fun to do.” In his book, *Authourship and the Films of David Lynch* (2012), Anthony Todd questions Rodley’s line of inquiry, gesturing to the larger issue that the filmmaker may have anticipated an attenuation of the Lynch auteurist brand had the ads aired in the United States. More generally, Todd argues against the

exclusion of commercial work from auteurist oeuvres. He makes a compelling case, contending that the contemporary auteur is not inimical to commercial interests, nor necessarily friendly to them. Thus, “it has become the modern auteurist’s task to plot a route between the two paths,” between the illusionist, enveloping mode of narrative cinema and the realist mode of the “cinema of attractions”. Similarly, effective television advertisements must be both immersive and persuasive, navigating the path between indirect and direct communication. They are circumspectly crafted mini-narratives, created to arouse audience desire and inspire action, and although they hawk wares, they are often also imbued with aesthetic value.

Twin Peaks in Japan

Twin Peaks enjoyed enormous success in Japan, emerging as a cultural phenomenon. Thousands attended unofficial mock funeral fan events in cities across the country. Many more visited Snoqualmie, Washington to eat cherry pie like Dale Cooper at the Double R Diner, and wrap themselves up in plastic to pose as the late Laura Palmer on the shores of Black Lake. The show’s feature film prequel *Fire Walk With Me* (1992) held its world premiere in Japan. In anticipation of the film release the series was rerun in its entirety on Japanese pay television channel Wowow, marking the seventh time the complete series had been broadcast in Japan. What is perhaps most surprising about the success of *Twin Peaks* in Japan, is that the country typically did not keenly embrace American television programming.

The success has been attributed to not only the merit of the series, but also its particular appeal to Japanese audiences and the manner of distribution. *Twin Peaks’* ethereal, otherworldly characteristics were a distinct alternative to the standard soap opera fare of the Japanese television system at the time. In addition, there was a general surge of popular interest in the occult beginning in the early 1990s, thus the paranormal features of the series may have been particularly attractive to Japanese audiences. The limited distribution of the show may also have contributed to its overwhelming success. There were only two outlets that provided access to *Twin Peaks*: the premium satellite channel Wowow and home video rental. Since Wowow was accessed by subscription only, not everyone with a television had the opportunity to view *Twin Peaks*. Amuse Video distributed the series in Japan and only released two or three copies of tapes to their video stores. Since the series occupies fourteen tapes in its entirety, few stores had the complete set available. These combined circumstances resulted in an impression of exclusivity, and the scarcity of access may have actually helped to fuel *Twin Peaks* mania. In fact, according to journalist Andrew Pollack, at the height of excitement surrounding the show, few in Japan had actually seen the series. In light of the incredible popularity of the show, it is perhaps not surprising that Georgia Coffee approached David Lynch to adapt the

narrative for promotion of their product, considering the tendency in Japanese advertising to weave the dramatic and commercial.

Japanese commercials are most often implicit in their appeals, and rely on affective or indirect strategies to address their audiences. “Soft selling” refers to the advertising of products by association, whereas “hard selling” presents product features and benefits. According to Hiroshi Tanaka from Dentsu (Japan’s largest ad agency), soft selling is the dominant form of advertising in Japan, and much creative work has emerged from the ad industry that indirectly and directly associates brands with mood and feelings to create a compelling appeal. A demonstrably effective approach in the Japanese market is the use of celebrity or character endorsement and narrative advertising.

As a major strategy in soft selling product promotion in Japanese commercials, celebrities or television characters in are often featured in television advertisements.. Japanese audiences also have a predilection for foreign celebrities, usually American, in their commercials. In contrast to the United States where celebrity endorsements in television commercials are viewed as transparent money grabs for actors and celebrities, in Japan, this practice is looked upon favourably actually lending to legitimising celebrities as having “arrived” and serve to boost audiences for new films or television shows in which the celebrity stars. As early as 1955 commercials in Japan incorporated television program narrative elements including staging and characters to sell products on TV. Thus narrative television advertising is a common practice in Japan as it draws on storytelling and intertextuality to connect to audiences through implicit appeals. In a reversal of the product placement strategy more common in American media, narrative commercials create a story around the product, rather than embedding the product in the narrative. The advertised product is foregrounded and is presented as the focal point of the story line. Often narrative commercials are serialised, several episodes of the commercial continuing and furthering the branded narrative are released in succession.

These elements of Japanese advertising are clearly present in the *Twin Peaks* television commercials created for Georgia Coffee. The series’ narrative is recreated with the product, Georgia Coffee, placed at the centre of the plot; in this case, the product acts as a catalyst for the illuminating moments of the mystery. The adaptation of the *Twin Peaks* narrative and its original characters reinforced the series’ popularity and likely the intention of generating more viewership for the broadcasting of the show on Japanese networks. But more than this, the commercials have extended the *Twin Peaks* narrative, adding complexity to the series’ universe and fodder for devoted fans from 1993 to the present.

Music in Advertising

Music in advertisements does not merely bring its own coded meanings to the television

commercial, but rather combines with an ad's other elements to create, reinforce, or change meaning in a particular context. Michel Chion argues that music provides "added value" in audiovisual contexts, contributing to the continual construction of meaning, but how does music achieve this in persuasive texts? David Huron identifies six basic functions of music in advertising:

1. Entertainment, to engage an audience's attention;
2. Structure/continuity, to mediate visual or voice sequences and to heighten dramatic sections; 3) Memorability, to aid in product association and recall;
3. Lyrical language, which provides emotive, poetic audience appeals;
4. Targeting, the selection of musical style as socioeconomic identifier;
5. Authority establishment, the use of music to lend credibility to an advertised product.

These functions work in tandem with visuals, voiceover, and dialogue to communicate a brand message, arouse desire, and incite action on the part of the target audience. Several of Huron's functions are at work in Lynch's *Twin Peaks* commercials. Angelo Badalamenti's iconic score works to engage the audience's attention as entertainment through its direct reference to the series, and even hints at the trajectory of the storyline. The scores for these commercials also act as cohesion for the narrative, helping to structure the quick progression of the story, and help to maintain continuity across the four instalments. Not only does the music help to create memorability for the Georgia Coffee brand, but it also draws on the memories of musical associations with the show, intimately linking the product to the experience of watching *Twin Peaks*. Beyond the explicit musical and narrative reference to the series that targets fans of the show, the dominant use of the jazz themes – The Dance of the Dream Man and Audrey's theme – could have also been chosen because of their function as socioeconomic identifiers, as jazz is typically used to communicate a sense of sophistication. Finally, by contributing to the *Twin Peaks* mania that was at its height in Japan at the time of the filming and release of these commercials, the use of the show's music helps to create a sense of authenticity and credibility. The referential function of the adaptation of Badalamenti's soundtrack is the crucial link to the *Twin Peaks* universe, but arguably the continuity function of this music is what most significantly reconstitutes the *Twin Peaks* universe. The soundtrack helps to further the condensed, serial narrative in a sophisticated way, namely through phrasing and structural coherence.

Chion's concept of synchresis, a combination of the words synchrony and synthesis, is a phenomenon that occurs spontaneously and provides an "irresistible weld" between audio and visual elements that occur at the same time. A special occurrence of synchresis is the

synch point, where synchronisation occurs, defined by Chion as “a salient moment of an audiovisual sequence during which a sound event and a visual event meet in synchrony” and which “give[s] the audiovisual flow its phrasing”. The phrasing that synch points structure facilitates continuous attention through the discontinuous, attention-gaining, audiovisual fragmentation that is characteristic of televisual flow. According to Chion, “the synch point is indeed the place where the audiovisual ‘arch’ meets the ground before taking off again.” The audiovisual junctures that occur within Lynch’s commercials for Georgia Coffee help to structure the compressed narrative, by welding image and sound at transitional points in the narrative in order to economically organise the story. In the following sections, this essay will demonstrate how music in the Georgia Coffee ads serves not only a promotional function, but also hastens the plot and contributes to the construction of meaning.

The Georgia Coffee *Twin Peaks* Advertisements

It is perhaps not surprising that *Twin Peaks* was adapted to promote a coffee brand in Japan, due to both its incredible success and Agent Cooper’s near obsession with coffee. One blogger stated “the entire series of *Twin Peaks* is probably the greatest coffee commercial ever made.” Kyle MacLachlan did star as an Agent Cooper-like character in many commercials for coffee amongst other products, during and after the original airing of *Twin Peaks*. Of course, Cooper’s popular phrase “Damn Fine Coffee” was adapted as the commercial tagline for Georgia Coffee.

The commercials were created by Lynch through the agency McCann-Erikson Tokyo for Coca Cola’s most successful Japanese beverage brand, Georgia Coffee, and filmed in 1993. The ads star *Twin Peaks* characters Agent Cooper (Kyle MacLachlan), Shelly Johnson (Mädchen Amick), Deputy Hawk (Michael Horse), Lucy Moran (Kimmy Robertson), Bobby Briggs (Dana Ashbrook), the Log Lady (Catherine Coulson), and Deputy Andy Brennan (Harry Goaz), and were shot on the sets of *Twin Peaks*, recreated at Raleigh Studios in Hollywood; the original location of the show was the now closed City Studios in Van Nuys. Four commercials were contracted and aired, an additional four were initially scheduled but were cancelled after the company found they ultimately desired something more “traditional”. The commercials are titled, in sequence, “Lost”, “Cherry Pie”, “Mystery of G”, and “The Rescue”, each instalment is 30 seconds in length. The dialogue of the ads is spoken in English with Japanese subtitles, with the exception of a few short instances of dialogue and voiceover.

The commercials chronicle the search for a Japanese man’s (Ken) girlfriend (Asami) who has mysteriously gone missing. The characters from *Twin Peaks*, led by Agent Cooper, help to unravel the perplexing disappearance. Each commercial opens with the iconic *Twin*

Peaks shot, featuring the Twin Peaks town sign beside a road, the same image that is featured in the title sequence of the show. Though the narrative dominates these commercials, in about the middle of each advertisement, there is a visual break. These breaks feature three consecutive shots of coffee beans, coffee, and a Georgia Coffee can along with Agent Cooper's voiceover, which describe the product as "brewed rich" and note that it "tastes incredible". The first sip of Georgia Coffee in each ad appears to be the catalyst for the discovery of a new clue to further the storyline.



The opening shot of each of the four Georgia Coffee commercials, the same image shown at the beginning of the *Twin Peaks* title sequence.



Georgia Coffee product images that accompany Agent Cooper's voiceover description.

Beyond the inclusion of the series' characters and setting, several narrative elements of *Twin Peaks* are weaved in recurring fashion into the commercials. The missing woman, Asami, for whom Ken and Cooper are searching, seems to be an amalgam of the mysterious female leads of the show. She is missing like Laura at the beginning of the narrative, leaves clues like Audrey, and Cooper's rescue of her from the Black Lodge is reminiscent of his search for his own love interest, Annie Blackburn. Cooper's quirky

thumbs up is present in every commercial, signalling his approval of Georgia Coffee. Lightening indicates the presence of some evil or significant change in tone as it does in the series and often arrives in conjunction with the appearance of the Log Lady. The exception is in the last instalment, in which the most dramatic flash of lightening occurs when Cooper and Asami emerge from the Black Lodge.

Many of Twin Peak's main musical themes are included in the commercials: the title theme, Dance of the Dream Man, and Audrey's theme. Each serves its own purpose for the series and those functions are transposed into the commercials' narrative. The commercials are generally divided musically in two, the first half works as an establishment of setting and the second supports the development of plot by drawing on a narratively important musical reference to the show. The title theme is present at the opening of each commercial sonically establishing the audiences' arrival in the *Twin Peaks* universe. The Dance of the Dream Man theme is used in two of the commercials as an inference to the Black Lodge ("Lost" and "A Mystery of G"). Audrey's theme appears in the second commercial ("Cherry Pie") as the scene changes to the Double R Diner, where Asami, like Audrey, has left Cooper a clue. The following analysis focuses on the last commercial of the four instalments to examine closing of the serial narrative.

Analysis

Mick's story grammar analytical framework will be adapted here to demonstrate how the narrative is condensed, with consideration of how synch points serve to punctuate and hasten the narrative. The base structure elements of setting, beginning, reaction, attempt, outcome, and ending information are used to draw out how the story is audiovisually constructed as well as the modal elements that signal the change from one stage of the narrative structure to the next. Below is a close reading of the advertisement and Figure 1 provides a visual analysis of the flow of the story grammar elements within "The Rescue".

This commercial opens with the Twin Peaks establishing shot featuring a road with the Twin Peaks town sign. As with all the commercials, there is a slight delay at the beginning before the title theme begins. The theme serves as an aural initiation into the *Twin Peaks* universe, in the same way as for the series itself. It does this in a way that is much more explicit than in other story ads generally, and in borrowing this television narrative convention intimately links the commercials to the series. This opening section of the commercial serves as the "setting" element of the story ad.

The setting continues as the scene changes to Cooper, Ken, Andy, and Hawk walking through Ghostwood Forest at night equipped with flashlights. They encounter the entrance to the Black Lodge that appears as it does in the series; a cleared out area in the forest in the centre of which is a ring of both rocks and young, bare sycamore trees that encompass

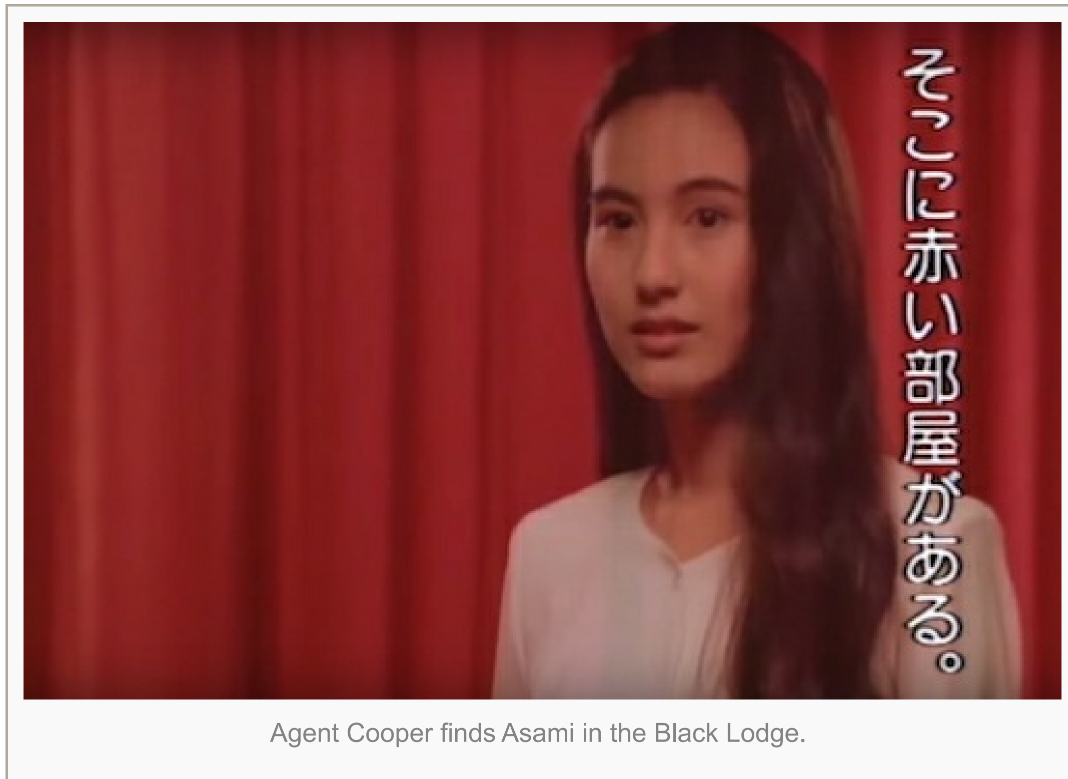
a black mystery substance. Agent Cooper speaks, “That’s where I’ll find Asami”. The arrival at the Black Lodge and Cooper’s decision to enter constitute the “beginning event” and “reaction” elements of story ad grammar. One of the flashlights abruptly lands on the Log Lady in medium close up, and she exclaims “Watch” (Synch Point 1). This quick interjection by the Log Lady contains two points of interest. The first is that in each of the previous three commercials, the Log Lady enters after Agent Cooper’s praise of Georgia Coffee with the affirmation “it’s true,” echoing his good taste. However, in this commercial she simply states “watch”, and her presence is not associated with the product in any way. In line with the Log Lady’s often abrupt and confusing–though often prophetic–statements, the viewer wonders whether her outburst is a command or a warning. Secondly, Lynch employs flashing light as a motif in the series (as well as in his subsequent work), a technique which often signifies an abrupt change of mood. The light that lands on the Log Lady’s face also functions in this way as well as a synch point, which in turn provides a pivot to Badalamenti’s Dark Mood Woods/Red Room theme. The new theme underscores the following much darker section of the commercial’s narrative, including Cooper’s descent into the Black Lodge, and situates the audience in the next stage of story ad grammar: the “development”. The group has arrived at the entrance to the Black Lodge and Cooper knows he must enter to save Asami, thus our protagonist has set a “goal path”.



The Log Lady’s appearance and flash of light serve as a synch point and bridge into the following narrative section of the ad.

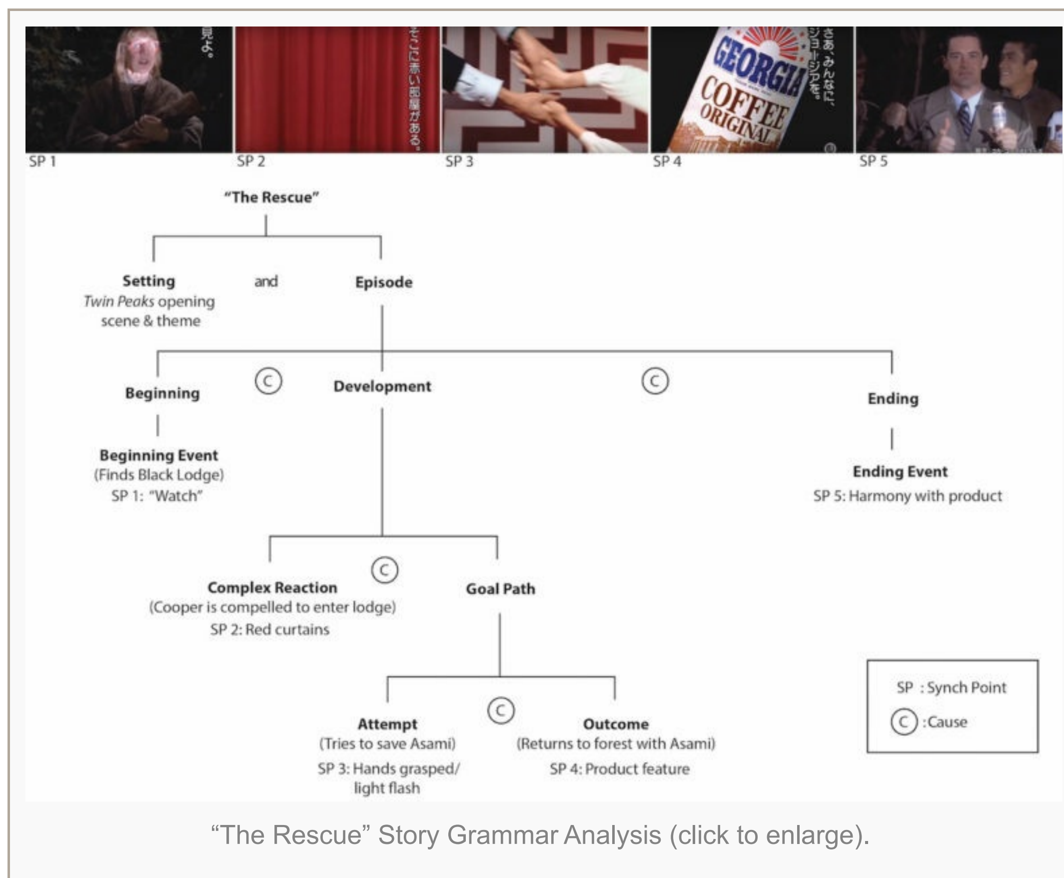
The image then changes to a long shot of the back of Agent Cooper standing in the circle as he states, “The Black Lodge isn’t in this world”. A quick cross cut to Cooper’s anxious

companions shows their expressions as red curtains appear before Cooper and he walks through them into the Black Lodge. As he enters, Cooper states, “Inside there’s a red room”. As he utters the words “red room” the image changes to a full screen of red curtain and a swell in the score, this interaction of music, voice, and image serving as another synch point that indicates not only Cooper’s arrival, but also emphasises the significance of this place (SP 2). Cooper’s foray into the Black Lodge is his attempt to achieve his goal of saving Asami.



Agent Cooper finds Asami in the Black Lodge.

Asami then appears in front of the curtain, and Cooper moves towards her with a whispered “Asami”. She responds with “Cooper” in reverse speech characteristic of the women Cooper encounters in the Red Room in the series. He moves toward her and the visuals shift to an overhead shot of Cooper grasping her hands over the Red Room’s iconic black and white zigzag patterned floor. Their physical contact is followed by a flash of light that transports Asami and Cooper above ground. The bright light also flashes on the surface as Cooper and the missing girl appear heaped on the ground before their friends. This is likely the most significant synch point of the commercial, as it is both visually and aurally distinct. The screen is engulfed in white and the event is punctuated with a lightning crash-like sound effect (SP 3). This is the conclusion of Cooper’s attempt, and in the next section it is revealed that Cooper was successful, and thus the narrative can progress to the next stage of story grammar, the “outcome”.



"The Rescue" Story Grammar Analysis (click to enlarge).

The latter half of the series' title theme emerges, the first time it is heard in these commercials, as Ken runs over to embrace Asami. Happily reunited, the couple exchange the first dialogue spoken in Japanese: "Ken, what happened to me? Where was I?" Asami asks. Ken replies, "it's okay now." Ken then turns to Cooper and suggests "Georgia?" The visual narrative is then broken by three consecutive shots with Cooper's commentary: first a cup of coffee beans, "brewed rich"; then a hot cup of coffee, "tastes great"; and finally a can of Georgia coffee, "Georgia all around!" (SP 4). In his analyses, Mick does not address these product feature sequences, which seem to partially step outside of the diegesis of story ads to directly address the audience. This may be because of their overt promotional address and that they break with the narrative flow of the commercial. However, in these ads it would seem that Cooper's voiceover does operate within the story world of the commercial; the celebratory drinking and praise of Georgia Coffee functions within the "outcome" section of the narrative.

The final scene features Hawk, Andy, the Log Lady, Cooper, Ken, and Asami in the dark with flashlights dancing over them as they all take a sip of Georgia Coffee, with the Georgia Coffee logo below. The culminating shot is a medium close up of Agent Cooper looking straight into the camera offering an enthusiastic thumbs-up, which aligns with the last word of the ad (SP 5) and demonstrates narrative harmony with the product.



Agent Cooper offers his signature thumbs up.

The fourth commercial is distinct from the others in that the narrative is much more condensed. The development of the plot is probably hastened out of necessity, since the second block of originally scheduled commercials was cancelled, though this cannot be confirmed. The juxtaposition of Cooper's upbeat promotional speech and the quick cuts of Georgia Coffee products and sound effects with the sweet and slow latter half of the title theme seem incongruent, but do work to foreground the product and are consistent with Lynch's use of sound and image in the previous three commercials. The introduction of the latter half of the title theme, as Cooper and Asami emerge from the Black Lodge, is the first time this music is heard throughout the four advertisements and it serves to communicate the completion of the narrative. The points of synchronisation guide the pacing of the compressed narrative, helping to navigate the audience through the forest, Black Lodge, and finally to the conclusion of the serial storyline.

Conclusion

David Lynch's work on these Georgia Coffee commercials curiously demonstrate his creative ability to adapt his own, longer form auteurist work for the condensed, product-oriented realm of advertising. When Lynch and Mark Frost began work on *Twin Peaks*, the length of the narrative was yet indeterminate, and had these coffee advertisements not been cancelled after only four, the TV commercial adapted narrative could have potentially continued for much longer. These commercials, that seem an oddity, were meant only for Japanese audiences, but have worked their way into the fan imaginative as extensions to the series, as one YouTube user commented on the final commercial, "This is the closest

we get to an ending of Twin Peaks”. That these commercials can be described as a “mini-series” or “sequel” is a testament to their circumspect narrative construction through sound and image, as well as their wider cultural value.

As the show’s fans anticipate the return of the series on Showtime, the excitement of *Twin Peaks* mania is beginning to emerge, though perhaps not as acutely as its Japanese manifestation in the early 1990s. An interest in Lynch’s transmedial, commercial, and lesser-known artistic works accompanies the resurgent enthusiasm for the series, and this output undoubtedly belongs to the auteur’s critically acclaimed catalogue.

This article has been peer-reviewed.

Endnotes